1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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491
492
351

A JAUNTING CAR "FACES THE ROAD"

[facing p. 148]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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CHAPTER X

The Old in the Community[1]

LET us examine the life of a local community in the rural "West of Ireland" and put to the test of observation the claim that the clique of evening visitors among the old men of the community plays a decisive role in its social life. Perhaps Rynamona already mentioned affords the best example. Yet any other community the authors knew well would afford as good a one. In all of them the old men met in much the same way and, in spite of different names and persons, acted in much the same way to form a similar old men's clique. By taking the example of Rynamona, we can throw the generalities of this conduct into relief.

Rynamona is a medium-sized townland in the limestone country of North Clare. It is like many another in the "good land" of rough limestone outcrops stretching back from the sea into the glaciated lakes strewn north in County Clare. To reach Rynamona is no easy task, even for horse and car. The main road north out of Corrofin to Kilfenora passes through Kilnaboy, where twelve houses, a school, a chapel, and a post office are all that remains of an antiquity preserved to the eye only in the ninth-century church and graveyard.

There, beside the graveyard, a side road leads off toward

[1] Much of the material in this chapter is taken from *The Irish Countryman* (London: The Macmillan Company, 1936), by Conrad M. Arensberg. It is used here by permission of the publishers.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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Glanquin Mountain and the hills of Burren beyond. Along it one passes through ragged upland for a mile and a half. This is Kilnaboy Commons, and its many small fields bear witness to its having been a refuge of the evicted, laboriously cleared of stones. The upland is not high. It merely gives rise enough to start a half mile of gentle slope downward into a basin filled with a little lake. Rynamona lies round the lake.

The fields here are cleared, too, and cut up between with limestone ridges. But the grass grows richly among the crags and ridges. The farmers are a fairly prosperous lot.

Eight of their houses stand in an irregular cluster on the lake shore. This is Rynamona village. Five others are scattered through the fields and across the lake. These households and a few more a little further off make up the community. These are small farms of the kind we met in Luogh. No one has more than nine cows; and only one has fewer than two. Except for the eight houses huddled in the village, fields and meadows stretch away from the haggard gate. In the case of the villagers' holdings, the arrangement is not much different. Their fields are scattered about and behind their haggards in irregular patterns. In addition to these fields, most of them have several acres, carved out for them by the Land Commission on an estate about two miles off.

Rynamona is a closely knit community. Reduplicated bonds of kinship unite all the households. "We are all related one way or another," they describe it. Cooring is the usual form of coöperation, and the village as a whole holds itself responsible amid grumbles for the maintenance of the borheen (road) which leads out to the outside world of the towns. Nowadays the County Council pays the sons who break stones and lay them in the winter months, but the village still assigns a bit of the road to each householder. Small matter if the borheen is bad, for a well-trod maze of

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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farmers converge upon Ennis. In each case a center, whether a larger market town or one of the smaller villages, serves a natural area demarcated by the configuration of the land and the course of the roads.

In such natural regions, particularly in more remote and mountainous country, the roads determine the intercourse of the communities with one another. Today each focal point is joined with another by a motor road. As the roads wind out from the larger centers, shops come to be placed at the strategic crossroad; a public house springs up; perhaps a schoolhouse, a parochial house, a chapel of the parish, rise beside them. Nowadays creameries are put up at these or still other points along the roads, where they are most conveniently accessible to small and medium farms producing milk. Even more recently lorries have begun to come direct to the crossroad to pick up produce that once, before motor traffic, had to be carried by the farmers themselves all the way to town.

Plotting out the market areas of the towns and villages of the countryside reveals a characteristic of social and economic space even here where the deepest hinterlands are never more than a half-day's leisurely trip by horse and cart. Any list of customers plotted by residence around a minor center gives an area which extends considerably farther in the direction away from the nearest larger center than it does in the direction leading to it. The minor centers draw principally from the hinterlands behind them and their areas extend only a little way along the roads in the direction of the next larger center. Ennistymon in North Clare draws custom twelve miles to the north, but to the south its influence reaches only three miles up the valley of the Inagh River, where the region of the larger center, Ennis, begins. Ennis itself serves all Clare, and its own immediate area extends, to judge from the residences of the farmers who come to buy and sell in her markets, beyond Ennistymon

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438 to the north and as far as Killadysert to the south. In the direction of Limerick, the metropolis of southwest Ireland, however, the influence of Ennis ends at Newmarket-on-Fergus, a scant five miles off.

491 494 496 Today the roads both great and small provide all-weather routes for every kind of local traffic. They carry many lorries and not a few buses in competition with the only local railroad — the small and winding West Clare Railroad, which joins Kilrush and Kilkee to Ennis and Limerick in the east, and Gort and Galway in the north, tapping Ennistymon and Corrofin on the way through, all this in the roundabout leisurely fashion of the earlier days of railroading.

491 The main roads are much more direct. They follow divides and occasionally cut right across high bog country. Today they negotiate bogs, which once would have prohibited any sort of transportation during wet weather, by dint of side ditches and high crowns of gravel and dirt. Over high country they have better foundations and wander in comparatively straight fashion through the country.

491 653 At various points along these main roads there are branches today penetrating the countryside. These are rougher and simpler constructions of crushed stones taken from local quarries, leased by the County Council. The stone is broken by laborers and small farmers of the district through which the road runs. In the case of the smaller roads each landholder is responsible for the bit of the road that runs by his land. "Road metal," as the crushed stone is called, is spread during the late autumn, winter, or very early spring. When the weather is dry, in summer, a fine white dust rises after every vehicle. But in the rainy months of spring and winter the roads are soft and full of chuck holes, and new stones must be laid down. Then the heavy [493] iron-tired carts of the farmers break them further and press them into the soft roadbeds.

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The interlocking net of roads covering Clare high and low must have been fairly complete at an early period. In high country many of the roads were "famine roads," built to give relief during the "bad times." In lower, richer land they are older. They ran originally from one concentration of estates to another, reflecting the older social order. Even today there is still a considerable amount of new road building carried on by local authorities, opening up districts which formerly had little or no communication with the outside world. There are still many farmhouses and village clusters of farmhouses far away from any improved road in higher country. Their inhabitants rely on rough borheens and stony trails leading from the nearest road. Many such isolated houses were originally built in inaccessible parts of hills and bogs to keep their owners from the eyes of bog rangers and estate stewards and to hide them from the threat of eviction.

Today the roads are kept up by the county government and the state. The system of road labor is very old. Private contracts for stones, maintenance, and repair and gang work under county officials are still important sources of outside work for the farm communities and occasions of local relief important in county politics.

The small farmer today uses five principal methods of travel. Choice among these is determined by the nature of one's errand and the status of the traveler.

The motor car is the newest and most costly method of transport. Small farmers do not own motor cars. They hire them from the towns when occasion arises. The motor car is still in process of introduction into the Irish Free State. In the countryside it is used only in time of crisis and high ceremony. If a member of a farm family needs hospital attention, he is removed to the nearest hospital, either in a private motor car or in the free county ambulance. At a wedding and an important funeral a family may engage

boots of the bearers or else the type of barrow (of wood or straw) on which the coffin was borne, served to prevent the coffin from touching the soil. Again, in Ireland (at least, in parts of County Wexford), as in some European countries, wooden crosses or other memorials were left behind at such halts; in the Kilmore area of South Wexford, two crosses are carried with each funeral—one is left at the roadside at a halting-place, the other is set up on the grave. Cairns were often associated with funeral resting-places. It was customary in certain European countries for the bearers to partake of food and drink at resting-points; this, I am told, was the practice also in parts of Donegal and Waterford. Having rested for a while, fresh bearers took up the coffin, and the graveyard was ultimately reached. 764 [264]

I have already referred to the practice of laying down the coffin when a boundary-line was reached. My father, who died six years ago, at the age of 86, told me about a funeral-boundary custom in my native parish of Tuosist, in County Kerry, in the extreme southwest corner of Ireland. He was born in 1863 in the townland of Clogherane in Kerry, only a mile distant from the County Cork border. The high range of the Caha Mountains runs for over thirty miles through the peninsula of Béara, and separates at this point the Kerry parish of Tuosist from the Cork parish of Clanlawrence. During the Famine period of 1845–50 the men who lived at either side of the pass, Bealach Scairte, which led from one county (and parish) to the other, were employed, by way of a relief-scheme, in building a road across the pass. When the work ceased, the middle portion—about two miles in length—still remained undone. And so it remained until about twenty-five years ago, when, by the aid of State funds, the road now known as The Healy Pass was built across the mountain and the two ends were joined up. I often crossed by the old path from Kerry to Cork myself, before the new road was built; it was not so difficult in the early stage of the journey, but when the narrow defile (An Céim Cumhang) at the border was reached, one had to clamber as best one could over and between huge boulders which had fallen into the defile, some of them weighing forty or fifty tons, at a rough estimate. 764 491 [794]

Any funeral which now has occasion to pass from Cork to Kerry (or *vice versa*), can do so with the luxury of a hearse and motor-cars. But it was different when my father was a boy, and for long generations before that. He told me that one day, when he was on his way to the school at Glenmore—it was in the 1870's—he saw a large concourse of men, both young and old, passing along the old road at the foot of the mountain and through the fields. They were all carrying weapons or implements of some kind—some had hay-forks, he said, others had scythes, others hatchets, still others heavy sticks. He asked later on where they were going, and was told that they were going to meet a funeral, which was coming into Kerry from Cork, at the boundary-line. He told me that he knew well the Kerryman, who was leader of the large group; I knew him too, as he lived to a great age, and could speak no English. His name was Conchobhar Uaithne Ó Súilleabháin, and he lived at Shinnagh in the parish of Tuosist. My father told me that he heard later from some of those that were present at the boundary-line, that when the Corkmen appeared at the border, carrying the corpse tortuously on their shoulders, Conchobhar stepped in front of the bearers and stood with his stick raised on the large flat stone which marked the border at this point. The stone, by the way, is still known as Leac na gCorp (The Stone of the Corpses), and it is in the middle of the hollow which, avoiding the defile, was used by funerals, or by cattle 764 578 [191]

7:Johnson K-4 (no date) 1958
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

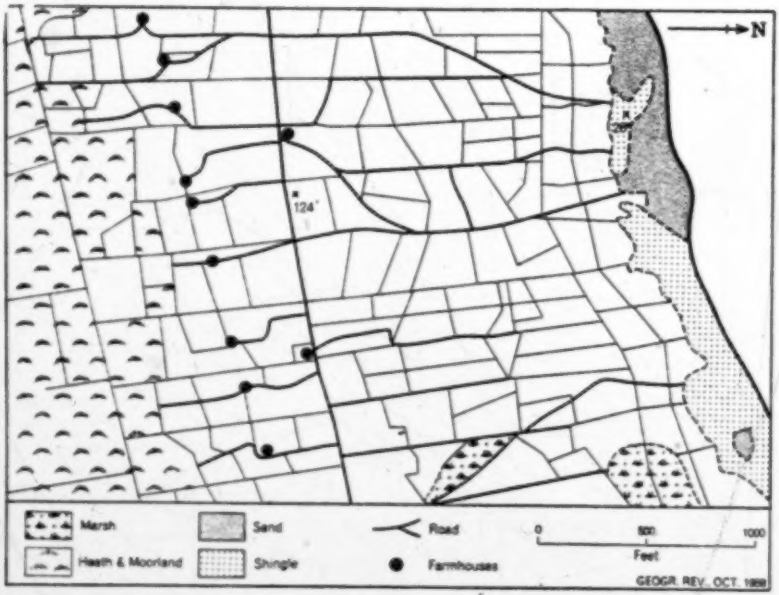

FIG. 4—"Striped" farms and fields in County Kerry. (Based on the Ordnance Survey, by permission of the Minister of Finance, Republic of Ireland.)

mentary authorization. Although it is rarely possible to obtain information on the methods and precise date of consolidation, the destruction of the system can be explained, in broad terms, by its growing inefficiency and by the dissemination of new agricultural techniques.

Some of the unsatisfactory aspects of rundale agriculture sprang from the steady growth of the population of Ireland, which continued from sometime in the middle of the eighteenth century until the Great Famine of 1845–1847.[30] This increase led to a constant encroachment on various uncultivated areas, a process in which the general adoption of the potato as a subsistence crop played a major part.[31] But the "waste" lands brought under cultivation had not been completely unused, since often they were grazed by livestock under a well-developed transhumance.[32] This seasonal movement was important to the rural economy, because efficient rundale farming required that the animals be removed from the unfenced cultivated strips during the growing

[30] K. H. Connell: The Population of Ireland, 1750–1845 (Oxford, 1950).
[31] *Idem*: The Colonization of Waste Land in Ireland, 1780–1845, *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, Ser. 2, Vol. 3, 1950–1951, pp. 44–71.
[32] J. M. Graham: Transhumance in Ireland, *The Advancement of Sci.*, Vol. 10, 1953–1954, pp. 74–79.

[Text continues on p. 565]

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

haps our knowledge of the strains which make up the peoples of the world, Ireland included, may stand us in good stead.

Already such work as this will show us the relation of the Irish to other European strains and help us to trace out historical currents in the country. Think of the field such work opens! Where is the Gael pure today? Who is the Firbolg, the aboriginal whom the Milesians found in possession? Who and where are the invading Gall? Briton, Norman, Dane, Fleming, Saxon, Englishman and Scotsman brought their bloods to this land and mingled them with the Gael. What traces have they all left and what bloods are at work today?

All these queries, nevertheless, do not primarily concern us in this discussion. The antiquity of some of the data stimulates another inquiry. But we cannot escape the sway of these other considerations entirely. There is no reason why we should. Even if they can offer us no direct aid, they can, nevertheless, afford us a stimulation.

Some such thoughts as these must have been in the social anthropologist's mind when he first made his way into a rural community. I cannot speak for my colleagues, Mr. Warner of Chicago University and Mr. Kimball of Harvard, who helped to gather the field material on Ireland. But I *can* speak for myself.

I felt Ireland's fascination as I toiled along behind my bicycle up the mountain road that runs

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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from the narrow valley lands at Doolin in the extreme north-west of County Clare. I was on my way to my first stay in an Irish west-country farm community. My road, no wider than a bridle-path, led up a sharp escarpment out of the tiny valley which empties its stony river into the Atlantic, not three miles away from the southernmost island of Aran. Once the top of the rim is reached the mountainside flattens out into a green and gently sloping table-land. Standing there one can see the whaleback rocks that are the Aran Islands and the masses of Mount Elva on the southern shore of Galway Bay. Far beyond in Connemara, one can catch the glint of the Twelve Pins, if the day is 'hard' and sunny. Off to the left, the table-land breaks off abruptly three hundred feet downward into the Atlantic, for the famed Cliffs of Moher are here, reminders of an Irish mountain that the sea has shorn off clean.

The community toward which I was making my way lies along the table-land between mountain-top of bracken and black bog and the cliffs. It keeps up the old tradition. It calls itself Luogh, and its language, at least that of the old people, is Irish, but the young people are forgetting the old tongue. English is the more common speech today, even here. Yet Mr. Delargy, the editor of the *Irish Folklore Journal*, has collected a large number of stories, songs and traditional tales and sayings here, some of them going back to the saga cycles.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

361 of rough limestone outcrops that stretch back from the sea into the glaciated lake-stream North Clare country. To reach Rynamona is no easy
361 task, even for horse and car. The main road north
491 out of Corofin to Kilfenora passes through Killinaboy, where twelve houses, a school, a chapel and a post-office mark an ancient settlement. Only a ruined ninth-century church and graveyard attest to its great antiquity.

There, beside the graveyard, a side-road leads off toward Glanquin mountain, and the hills of Burren beyond. One follows this road along through ragged upland for a mile and a half.
361 This is Killinaboy Commons, and its many small fields, laboriously cleared of stones, bear witness to its having been a refuge of the evicted. The upland is not high. It merely gives rise enough to start a half-mile of gentle slope into a basin whose bottom is filled with a little lake. Rynamona lies round the lake, at the end of a rough borheen.

The fields here are cleared, too, and cut up between with limestone ridges. Yet the grass grows richly among the crags, and the farmers are a fairly prosperous lot.

Eight of their houses stand in an irregular cluster on the lake shore. This is 'Rynamona village'. Five others are scattered through the fields and across the lake. These households, with a few more a little farther off, make up the community.

The farms are all small; they are of the kind we

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

They are market-towns and administrative seats. 361
Their economics is that of distribution, not production. The industrial revolution has passed southern Ireland by. The shop, the pub, the fair bring the towns their life-blood and link them to their hinterlands and to the outside world. Many of them still collect market tolls on rural produce, as if they still had a ring of stone-wall fortification about them. Many of them have no fair green but throw open all their streets to shouting, bargaining men and milling cattle, on the day of the fair, surrendering themselves entirely to the countryside upon which they live.

One still approaches many of them today as one approached them in the sixteenth century, [491]
although now perhaps an automobile road breaks a new entrance into them or the railroad halts a [496]
jaunting car's distance away. The roads that radiate inward toward the heart of the town are still lined with labourers' and artisans' thatched cottages long before one reaches the town itself. As one proceeds along them, the cottages give way to shops and public houses which rise higher and more stately as one nears the centre, in the market-place or in the central square. There, quite often, that emporium of the most valuable commodity of all—the local bank—now dominates the scene.

Between the shop-fronts, back lanes lead off to the recesses in which the labourers live; and, off by

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

361 four houses together, which can almost invariably be shown
174 to have once been larger: even these tiny groupings are referred to as "towns," and the use of this word suggests that such clusters were once the nuclei of the "townlands." It is because of this association with the vital townland unit, and because many rural customs find their explanation in past conditions, that I have thought it worth while to attempt a reconstruction of the chief features of these old communities. This is based largely on records and on surviving examples which I have studied in Co. Donegal and Co. Antrim. Allowance must be made for differences between one region and another, but I believe the following description to be applicable to most parts of Ireland, though the decay of the village-system began earlier in some areas than in others.

Travellers a century or so ago tell us that villages with 50 or 60 houses were not uncommon. In 1802 Donegal is said to have had about 500 villages, with an average perhaps of 20 or 30 families to each, but they were "dispersing daily into separate habitations and holdings" (Figs. 13 & 14). One uses the term village for want of a better word, for such clusters lack many of the well-known features of the English village. They were essentially communities of related families bound together in "friendship"—the word "friend" means a blood-relation in Ireland—with one or two surnames predominating in each group. This fact is still true of townland populations even though the holdings are scattered, and it
[55] helps to explain the prevalence of nicknames in rural Ireland, and, for the same reason, in Wales and Scotland. The houses were clustered without plan or order (and never strung together end-to-end) generally in some sheltered hollow in the richest part of the townland, though they might be disposed along a road with some semblance of regularity. Shelter is always the first consideration. I have been told in Donegal that house sites were selected by the simple process of throwing up a hat on a windy day and letting the wind decide by noting its resting place.

174 Made roads were almost unknown in hilly districts—there
● 49 was "no wheel car" among a population of 8,000 in one
361 [TEXT CONTINUES TOP OF P. 50--ANALYST]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Donegal parish in 1837—and all the carrying depended upon slide cars and creels (Chapter 12). The village had neither shop nor inn, and required little besides salt and iron from the market town. These self-sufficing communities were held together by blood ties and by the exchange of services under the Irish open-field or "rundale" system of cultivation. Around the house-clusters were small walled gardens and haggards, but the arable land was an unenclosed open field in which each holder had his scattered patches, averaging perhaps a quarter of an acre in area. There are cases on record where 29 partnership-peasants shared 422 plots of ground, where one man held 32 different patches, or again where 26 people had shares in a field of half an acre. In some districts it is known that the plots changed hands periodically. but no memory of this survives in the areas I am acquainted with. Live stock was sometimes subject to joint-ownership, with disastrous results where, for instance, three men claimed shares in a horse and could not agree as to the ownership of the fourth leg. But most of the stories that are told about rundale farming belong to the period of its decline.

Between the cultivated patches, which were dug with the spade or ploughed and devoted almost exclusively to potatoes and oats, ran waste strips or balks ("mearings," "bones" or "ribs") often left as much as three yards wide, apparently from a sort of pride, though they had their uses both as a source of hay and as tracks for the creel ponies when they could not enter the waterlogged plots. In the absence of fences all livestock had to be tethered, spancelled, herded, or sent to the mountain pastures during the crop season, which traditionally began on St. Patrick's Day (March 17th) and ended on the last day of October (Hallowe'en), when the animals were free to wander over the whole townland throughout the winter. "Any that had not their potatoes dug, or other crops off the ground, were much injured, neither could any one man venture to grow turnips, clover or other green crops . . . no one would attempt to manure better or otherwise improve his proportion, as his neighbour's cattle only would have the benefit." It is clear that the introduction of the

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

493 now of iron but formerly of wood, that rotates with them. The wheels are so small—little more than two feet in diameter—that the floor of the car has to be raised up behind, and it carries such a small load that the number of horses in Ireland is said to have been considerably reduced when the spoke-wheeled cart took its place. In the 18th century "wheel-cars were used throughout the kingdom" in town and country alike: the Dublin "noddies" were of this type, and according to illustrations published in the early 18 hundreds the driver rode on the horse's rump. The low-backed car is now generally fitted with sides to make a "box car," but in former days it carried a kish of the kind used with the slide car. It should be noticed that until roads and tracks were [491] metalled—mostly within the last two centuries—the disc wheel had the advantage over the spoked wheel in soft loose ground. Even "superior farmers" in Donegal had only low-back cars as late as 1821, and we may repeat the statement made in Chapter 6 that there was "no wheel car" among a population of 8,000 in one Donegal parish in 1837. The slide [177] car and the creel did all the carrying. In the Glens of Antrim, too, the wheel-car was apparently something of a novelty about that time. An old man told me that his grandmother remembered the first car seen in her valley.

It must not be assumed from this that wheeled vehicles [401] were unknown in ancient Ireland: the literature suggests that they were in regular use but doubtless confined to the wealthier classes and districts. On analogy with other parts of north-western Europe the wheel was already known in Bronze Age Ireland. It is wrong to assume that the wheel was "invented" by the Irish peasants who adapted it to their slide cars. The disc and in turn the spoked wheel are ancient discoveries which came into use gradually as social conditions and road-making improved, and it was natural that the slide car should keep its form though lifted off the ground. Although we cannot accept the theory of local "evolution" for the spoke-wheeled cart, it is none the less clear that local experience controlled the details of its construction when it became

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

popular, which was for the most part within the last hundred years. 493

It may be suggested that the solid disc wheel influenced the shape of the spoked wheel, both in its narrow rim and small diameter and in the fact that it has very little "dish," and it cannot be denied that the slide car lives on in the structure of the modern cart. This consists essentially of two long "runners" which form in turn the front shafts, the side supports of the body and the back shafts or "trams." These projections are everywhere present and in some districts are as much as 3½ feet long. In its simplest form then, the cart is merely a flat platform resembling a slide-car on wheels, but it can be fitted with sides to make a "box-car," and this has become the standard shape in certain counties. It is now often fitted with old motor wheels and tyres to make a "soft car." Details of decorative work and styles of painting are markedly regional: in the Glens the body is blue and the wheels red: the front board of the cart has a lozenge design panelled or painted in red. Another subject which calls for investigation is the distribution and significance of horse-brasses and other trappings. They represent a very ancient tradition, as finds of the Early Iron Age demonstrate. [531] [492]

During the period of agricultural advancement in the 17-eighties several landlords introduced English waggons and tried to popularize them for farm work, but they were soon abandoned; the one-horse car was found to be much better fitted to the soft roads. Small things, whether we consider vehicles, livestock, fields or villages, seem to characterize Ireland. Except in towns and for processional purposes the four-wheeled vehicle has no place here: we are in the "two-wheeled" culture region. 493 178

We may close this chapter with a few comments on roads and tracks. Very little is known about ancient Irish roads, and although the use of chariots implies a knowledge of road-building one is inclined to be sceptical about the elaborate road system reputed to have existed in early Celtic times. To map these tracks without careful field-study is a popular but 491

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

491 unprofitable pastime. The many old metalled roads running from town to town in direct Roman fashion seem to be military or post roads no more than a couple of centuries old. A few ridgeway tracks are certainly ancient, probably prehistoric, and they need studying in connexion with seasonal booleying routes. Some old timber roads have also been observed in or under the bogs, but in general it seems that the majority of existing roads and lanes were constructed to keep pace with the improvements of agriculture and means of transport, and to feed the single farms which resulted from the break-up of the village system. Any large-scale map will show the extraordinary pattern of narrow lanes which is required to supply the evenly scattered homesteads. An economist might calculate how much valuable agricultural land is wasted by this multiplicity of tracks, but the "loanin's" and "bohereens" are an intimate part of the rural scene whose value is not to be assessed in money, and it is at the "loan-ends" that the young folk assemble on summer evenings.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

313 In the north long splits were twisted into fir-rope, a craft which is almost dead (Fig. 21 and Chapter 14). Both fir and oak were employed for constructional work of all kinds: old cabins will be found to be roofed with bog timber in most districts, and many implements, dressers, settles, stools, churns, tubs, slide-cars and even boats were fashioned from it. The buried trunks are located in winter by seeking frost-free patches on the bog-surface, or on summer mornings by noting where the dew lies thinnest. Their size and soundness are tested with an iron probing rod or "bog auger" and if satisfactory the trunks are then dug out.

491 Much might be said about the bog roads and means of access to the turf. In Armagh and Monaghan, to quote Mr. T. G. F. Paterson, the track or "car-path" by which the turf is carted home is called the "rampar" or "turf-pad," the rampar being the standing strip of bog preserved between cuttings. The various methods of tenure and rights of turbary are an interesting topic but a notorious source of trouble, and the Irish peasant finds ample opportunity for [691] indulging his litigious tastes in disputes over drainage and rights of way.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
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352 stools, and a rough table or two, with a dresser containing a scanty assortment of coarse earthenware, a spinning-wheel, and a quilting-frame, constitute the furniture of the kitchen. In one corner is a pile of turf for fuel, on which the fowl roost, and above the couples are stored the dried fish, &c., for the winter's use, and the agricultural and piscatorial implements.

415 The domestic utensils consist of the usual large three-legged pot, slung on a crook over the fire, a griddle, a frying-pan, and, perhaps,
352 a quern, a boran or sieve of sheepskin stretched over a wicker frame, and a couple of skids or shallow, circular wicker baskets. The furniture of the bedroom, or rooms, consists of a couple of tent beds; a few chairs and, perhaps, a small table. There is very rarely a loft
231 to the house. At night the cattle, fowl, and pigs are taken into the kitchen, the pigs being accommodated in a pen beside the fire-place, while the cattle are fastened at the opposite side of the room.

[491] 6. *Transport.*—The roads are good, and extend over a large part of the islands, but are only used for foot traffic and cattle, as there are
492 no wheeled vehicles of any description, and all goods are carried
[482] either in hampers slung on the back, the usual method of taking home potatoes, &c., or in two wicker panniers or cleaves, slung across the back of a pony or donkey, one or other of which is owned by nearly every family. The harness of these animals is home-made, and of primitive design, the panniers, manufactured from osiers grown on the islands, being slung from pegs on a wooden frame, beneath which, to protect the animal's back, is a thick straw mat saddle. Both sexes ride on the horses behind the panniers, and both adopt the same position, a sideways posture, the men not riding astride.

The method of taking home the harvest is picturesque; the ponies
[243] have cloths hung over their faces to prevent their eating the grain, and are then literally clothed with sheaves, which are hung all round them, and piled up so as to give them the appearance of walking straw stacks.

501 For water transport there are a good many boats of various descriptions, the primary use of which is for fishing; only one, the
[505] post-boat, which goes thrice a week to the mainland if the weather permits, being regularly used for transport.

The number and classification of the boats are, it is believed, given correctly below, but it was difficult to get any two accounts to agree.

There are five hookers, seven pookauns,[1] fifteen curraghs, one yawl, and about thirty rowing-boats.

[1] An undecked sailing-boat, cutter rigged.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

extreme north point of the peninsula. Off this part of the coast lies Eagle Island, high and rocky in coast and surface, and a lighthouse-station. From Frenchport (or rather Annagh Head, its southern boundary) southward, the coast is sandy beach, shingle, and low rocks, and is backed to a large extent by rolling ranges of sandhills. Off this part of the coast lie Inishkea and Duvillaun, having a sandy or rocky shore, and a surface of no great elevation. The eastern shore along Blacksod Bay and Broadhaven is sheltered and low.

The surface of the Mullet does not reach any very great elevation, the highest point in the northern part being 410 feet above sea level, and the rounded granite hill of Tarmon, in the extreme south, 369 feet. It is much diversified, a good deal of it being fertile land, especially on the east side, but in the north part there is a good deal of bog and moor, and in the south and west rolling sandhills barely held in check by bent. In some of the narrower portions a fertile belt lies between two sandy ones.

The district of Portacloy is a wild mountainous region, with a coast of precipitous cliffs of great height, and riddled with caves. Benwee Head, which rises above the sea to the height of 1000 feet, is just outside the mouth of the deep narrow inlet which forms the harbour. The surface of this part of the district is very wild, and consists largely of bog and mountain. The climate is very mild, frost and snow being of infrequent occurrence and not lasting for long, but the rains are heavy and almost constant during the greater part of the year, and storms are frequent and severe.

Vegetation flourishes well, but, owing to the storms, trees are very few and only grow in sheltered localities.

The whole district is largely cut off from the outer world by the wide stretch of wild and sparsely peopled country through which the mail road from Ballina runs.[1]

III.—ANTHROPOGRAPHY.

1. *Methods.*—The methods employed did not differ to any great extent from those made use of on the two previous occasions. A few

[1] I am indebted to Mr. G. H. Kinahan, M.R.I.A., for the following note on the geology of the Mullet:—The south rough portion is granite, while the north rough portion is in part Archæan (*query, the equivalent of the Sutherland Algonkian rocks that have been called Old Bay*), and in part of Archæan quartzite (query, the equivalents of the Scotch Torridan Sandstone); while the central portion is occupied by schists of an uncertain age that lie unconformably on the Archæan rock to the northward.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
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populated country, the district under consideration is practically isolated, and communication with other parts of the country is carried on by road or by sea. Mails and passengers are carried daily to and from Ballina and Belmullet by a good two-horse (Bianconi) stage-car; and a similar vehicle, an opposition venture, also makes the journey daily with passengers and light goods. The country beyond Belmullet is provided with mails twice weekly. Goods are conveyed by carts from Ballina, a distance of over forty miles, during the winter and spring, and large sailing boats are sometimes employed carrying heavy goods from Westport. But few wheeled-vehicles are used except by the better-to-do, and in the remoter parts hardly any are employed, turf, sea-weed, &c., being carried in cleaves or pardoges (panniers with movable bottoms, slung over the backs of horses or donkeys). The people, if poor, have to walk; those better off may ride to market. It is common for two to ride the one horse, a man in the saddle and a woman *en croupe*, or both equestrians may be women, in which case, sometimes, but very rarely, the woman in front may ride astride.

The main roads are pretty good, but many of the smaller ones are very little used, except at harvest time or when turf is being got in, and as a result are grass-grown and uneven. Some small fishing hamlets and outlying places are still unprovided with roads.

For water transport there are the sailing boats before mentioned, used for the conveyance of goods from Westport. The form of boat most in use is the curragh, which is manned by three men; it varies somewhat in pattern in different localities.

In the Mullet and the islands 142 curraghs are in use. Very few boats of other patterns are kept, as there are only three second-class boats (yawls), and about thirty third-class. At Portacloy there are about 30 curraghs.

The southern part of the peninsula and the islands obtain their turf supply by boat from Achill and Ballycroy.

V.—FOLK-LORE.

Although poor in so many other respects, Erris is particularly rich in folk-lore, many old customs, traditions, and beliefs, which have died out, or are dying elsewhere, still flourishing there. The legends and tales of the past and many old songs are still current, especially among the older people, who, however, will not readily communicate them to strangers, so that only a resident well acquainted with Irish

12: Freeman K-5 (1954) 1958 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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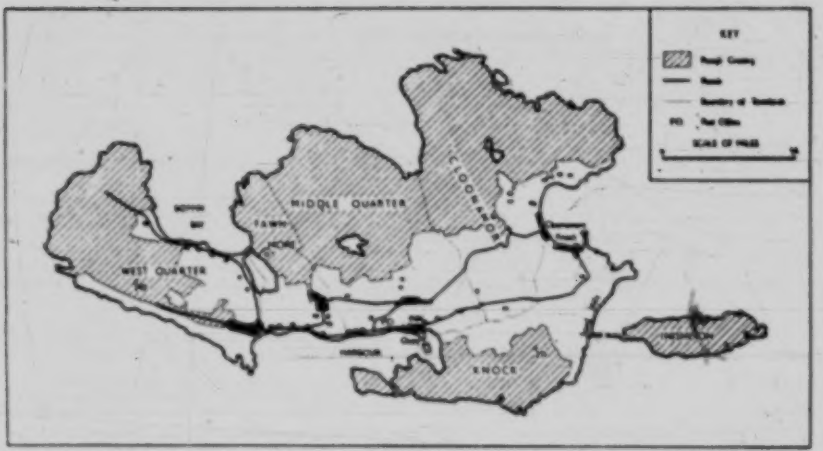

FIG. 1. The townlands of Inishbofin. Inishlyon has no inhabitants, but is used as sheep pasture. Cloonamore and Knock appear as a single line of houses on the shore but are in different townlands. The boundaries of the rough pasture and the distribution of houses were mapped in July, 1954. (Based on Ordnance Survey, 25 inches to 1 mile, Co. Galway, sheet 9, 1898, by permission of the Minister for Finance of Ireland.)

[p. 204(A)]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

311 where the land has been almost the sole available re-
[578] source go far to explain the jealousy with which established rights are maintained, but there are deeper needs and bonds in the rural community.

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FIG. 4. Map of scattered farms on the Co. Down coast, showing seaweed-roads. (Based upon the Ordnance map with the sanction of the Controller, H.M.S.O.)

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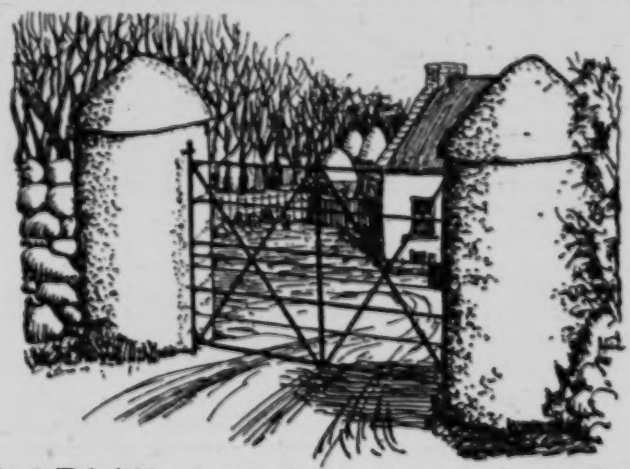

FIG. 5. 'Defended by a heavy iron gate hung between stout stone gate-pillars:' an Ulster farm.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

XIII

CARS AND CARTS

PEASANT communities concerned primarily with livestock which can be moved on the hoof have little need for elaborate means of transport. Long-tried devices adapted to the difficulties of the terrain continue to be used even in this age of tractors, and Ireland can show a remarkable variety of archaic farm vehicles of simple types. The heavy lumbering wagon would be out of place and out of scale in this environment. It is included in medieval inventories of manors and monasteries but it never took hold of the country, and although some landlords re-introduced English farm wagons in the eighteenth century, they were soon 'laid aside'.[1] The common Irish car was better adapted to the needs and skills of the people as well as to the condition of the roads.

The Irish low-back car, which is not yet extinct, is a light vehicle fitted with block wheels rigidly attached to a rotating axle (Fig. 55). Arthur Young commented that the loads they carried were 'such as an Englishman would be ashamed to take in a wheelbarrow'.[2] Yet he praised them because they required only one horse and did little damage to the roads. Prior to the eighteenth century there were very few roads except for those connecting the towns, and it seems that even the humble low-back cars were rare outside the urban spheres. For farm-work the wheel-less slide-car was used almost everywhere, supplemented by sledges, panniers, back-creels, and burden-ropes. It was progressive landlords who initiated, in the interests of the new agriculture, the construction of roads on their estates; and

[1] A. Young, *Tour*, 2, 22.
[2] Ibid., 2, 59.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

491 when the making and repair of 'cross roads' became a public
493 charge it was done on the basis of baronies, and the Grand Juries—composed largely of landlords—became responsible, under the presentment system, for local road-making and repairing. Thus from about 1760 onwards a fairly close network of roads began to be established in the richer parts of the country—especially about the big demesnes—and the way was open for the more capacious spoke-wheeled cart which held its own until in our own day it is being replaced by the lorry and the tractor-trailer.

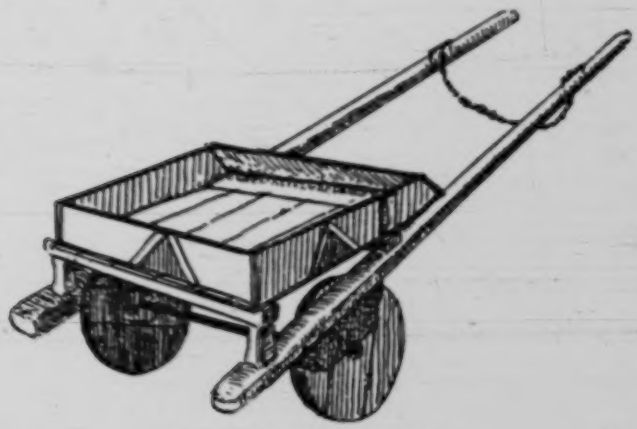

FIG. 55. Wheel-car, Co. Antrim.

175 In the face of abundant evidence as to the backwardness of
493 rural transport and the rarity of wheeled vehicles and made roads until quite recent times, it is startling to read of the prominence of chariotry and of the rapid movement of armies in the Irish legendary histories. In fact, up to date, the archaeological evidence which would clearly establish the use of chariots in early Celtic Ireland is scanty. There can be little doubt, however, that horse-drawn spoke-wheeled vehicles were a significant element in Celtic culture, and it is known that the Romans took into their language nearly a dozen Celtic names for horse-
[492] drawn vehicles.[1] Such fragments of harness as have been re-

[1] E. M. Jope, *U.J.A.*, 13 (1950), 57–60.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

covered from early Celtic sites in Ireland suggest that the horse was held in high regard and was perhaps reserved for pageants, combats and ceremonies. The detailed evidence in the legendary histories of ancient Ireland for the existence of roads, however, is clear. The fact that the Celtic roads are rarely traceable today is understandable in view of the physical conditions of the country, especially the prevalence of obliterating bogs. Moreover the road system must have decayed with the decline of Celtic culture. In any case it is evident that the use of the chariot was confined to the highest castes, and that its humble relation the block-wheeled car was fated to outlast it. The finely-spoked wheeled vehicles of the Celtic invaders were as much out of place in Ireland as the great wagons which later overlords introduced from England. The block-wheeled car, if not previously known in Ireland, may have been the native response to the impressive magic of the Celtic wheel, or it may have reached this country with Celtic camp-followers. We shall see that it could have been developed from the slide-car which almost certainly preceded it in Europe. The term 'wheel-car' as used in Ireland refers to the block-wheeled car and is clearly meant to distinguish it from the wheel-less slide-car. The spoke-wheeled cart is a newcomer in most parts. Nevertheless there is evidence that a light spoke wheeled cart continued to be used in early Christian times: an example drawn chariot-wise by two horses is figured on the eighth century Ahenny Cross in Co. Tipperary. It seems that such light carts were used for personal transport, for example St. Sampson took one with him, according to an eleventh-century account of his travels, to carry his books across Cornwall on his way from Ireland to Brittany.[1] And the spoke-wheeled cart must have been known in the planted areas since the Middle Ages, so that it is very probable that in parts of the country the cart has had a continuous life since early Celtic times.

But we should first examine certain archaic methods of transport which depend on the carrying power of beasts and men, or rather women, for in simple societies the bearers of children are also the burden-bearers. The romance of rural

[1] O. G. S. Crawford, 'Western Seaways' in *Custom is King* (1936), 196.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

501 of the River Nure were described as 'flat narrow boats equal at both ends and propelled by paddles'.[1] Earlier, about 1645, Gerard Boate described the cots as 'things like boats, but very unshapely, being nothing but square pieces of timber made hollow.' 'They are very common throughout all Ireland . . . even upon the great rivers and loughs'.[2]

[491] To judge from the numerous discoveries of small dug-outs at river crossings their last surviving use was for ferrying purposes. They were replaced locally by flat-bottomed cots built with wide planks laid edge to edge, such as serve the eel-fishers of the River Bann. These are propelled with a pole. The punt-like cot is also the old craft of the River Shannon. A number of dug-outs are found to have been adapted for propulsion with oars, using the single thole-pin of the rowing-curragh. The large rowing boats of Lough Neagh also use the single thole-pin: to give greater leverage for the heavy oars the iron thole-pin is set out from the gunwale on an outrigger or 'bolster'. In the cots of Lough Erne the oar is worked between double thole-pins (Fig. 78). The maze of lakes which make up the Lough Erne group have yielded many ancient dug-outs of varied types, some of them spoon-shaped, others rectangular and provided with carrying lugs. Others again seem to be both boat and sledge, an alternative to the portable curragh in a land strewn with little lakes. But the strangest vessel, apparently misnamed a curragh, was a kind of raft which is said to have survived until a hundred years ago, 'composed of wreaths of bull-rushes tied upon a frame or raft made of rough branches of trees'.[3]

226 Methods of fishing in river and lake include not only legitimate forms of angling and netting, but many ways of killing fish which game laws and other vested interests have made illegal, but have not extinguished. The spearing of salmon, prohibited since 1714, is now left to poachers, but well into the last century it was openly practised in the city of Galway.[4] On

[423] Lough Neagh yellow (feeding) eels are caught illicitly on long lines by fisherfolk whose claims to ancient rights have not been recognized by the courts.

[1] W. Tighe, *Statistical Observations, County of Kilkenny*, 150.
[2] G. Boate, *Ireland's Natural History*, 64, 136.
[3] W. F. Wakeman, loc. cit.
[4] A. E. J. Went, *J.R.S.A.I.*, 82 (1952), 110